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Letter dated 2 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the outcome document (see annex),* issued on the occasion of the third ministerial meeting of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, and respectfully request that it be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 22 (a).

(*Signed*) Rodrigo A. **Carazo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 2 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Third Ministerial Meeting
Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries
New York, September 26th, 2018
Declaration

We, the Members of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, Ministers of the Foreign Affairs of the Armenia, Belarus, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and the Philippines, having met on September 26th, 2018 at the third Ministerial meeting of the Group on the margins of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly:

Stress our commitment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant multilateral outcomes;

Recognize that middle-income countries still face significant challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that there is a need to better understand and address the diverse and specific development challenges of middle-income countries through a country-context approach;

Acknowledge that identifying and addressing structural gaps can improve the understanding of development needs of middle-income countries, helping to determine mechanisms capable of attending those gaps in a tailored fashion with higher efficiency and precision;

Emphasize the importance of knowledge-sharing platforms and the pivotal role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Middle-Income countries; and we reaffirm that South-South cooperation is an important element of international cooperation for development as a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. Also, *commit* to strengthening triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation;

Underscore the solidarity of middle-income countries with other developing countries, in particular the financial, technical, technology transfer and capacity-building support being provided by middle-income countries;

Welcome the continued efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness and impact of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness;

Draw attention to the fact that as many developing countries have recently graduated or will graduate from concessional financing windows because of higher per capita income growth, concerns have been raised over their access to sufficient and affordable long-term financing for SDG investments and that, as per capita income increases above low-income thresholds, access to external (concessional and non-concessional) public finance often decreases faster than can be compensated by increasing tax revenues in per capita terms;

Encourage multilateral development banks and international financial institutions to include multidimensional eligibility criteria in their financial policies,

for more sequenced, phased and gradual assistance that best addresses the opportunities and challenges presented by the diverse realities of middle-income countries;

Recognize those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of ODA/gross national income and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/gross national income to the least developed countries, and *Call* on all ODA providers to fulfil their respective commitments;

Recognize that economic growth is not equivalent to advancements towards sustainable development and that, at all levels of per capita income, middle-income countries continue to face serious challenges including obstacles in relation to poverty eradication, inequality, external debt and environmental vulnerabilities, among others. Improvement in macroeconomic indicators does not necessarily reflect advancements in the eradication of poverty, given that high inequality, or even a rise in inequality, remains pervasive in middle-income countries, even in those countries with high economic growth;

Note with concern that the graduation process, based on per capita income, does not foresee means of accompaniment and follow-up from intergovernmental organizations nor international financial institutions to countries that transit from one level of income to another;

Urge the United Nations Development System, especially now after its reform, to elaborate a comprehensive UN system-wide and long-term strategy aimed at facilitating sustainable development cooperation and coordinated support towards middle-income countries;

Acknowledge the efforts made by the Group in advancing our vision in the United Nations system, including our active participation and statements on behalf of the interests of the Group in key negotiations and events including the organization of a working roundtable on "The way forward of the UNDS in MICS", our participation on the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, the Forum on Financing for Development, and the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development;

Welcome the convening of the High-Level meetings of the Group with the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, DESA Under-Secretary General, the President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly and the Chief Economist in order to continue the promotion of a system-wide consideration of the principles and needs of our Group;

Highlight the need to establish a road map, jointly with the Department of Social and Economic Affairs and relevant organizations, in order to address the most imperative sustainable development needs of middle-income countries and the achievement of the sustainable development goals and other internationally agreed goals;

Stress the need to increase and facilitate the access of middle-income countries to sustainable development and climate change financial sources in support of national development plans and development objectives;

Note that international cooperation is still a powerful tool for complementing middle-income countries' efforts to mobilize public resources domestically to achieve sustainable development;

Look forward to the implementation of the resolution 72/230 "Development cooperation with middle-income countries", in particular the convening of the High-Level Event of the United Nations General Assembly as a way to raise the level of

discussions on the matter and to strengthen the promotion of the interests of middle-income countries;

Look forward to the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019, and believe it is a privileged space to continue advancing the agenda of the Middle-Income Countries;

Pledge to continue our work in promoting the need to develop transparent metrics beyond per capita income, building on existing initiatives, to assess development, to reflect an adequate system-wide consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and to include the consideration of poverty in all its forms and dimensions in the United Nations System and *Reiterate* our readiness to closely cooperate with the relevant UN agencies and other relevant international financial institutions to this end;

Renew our commitments to the Group as expressed in the terms of reference and *reiterate* our determination to support the advancement of our agenda during the 73rd Session of the General Assembly;

Decide to submit the present political Declaration as an official document of the General Assembly, so that it can be forwarded to the upcoming High-Level Meeting that will discuss the gaps and challenges of middle-income countries in the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, as called for in Resolution 72/230.

New York, September 26th, 2018.